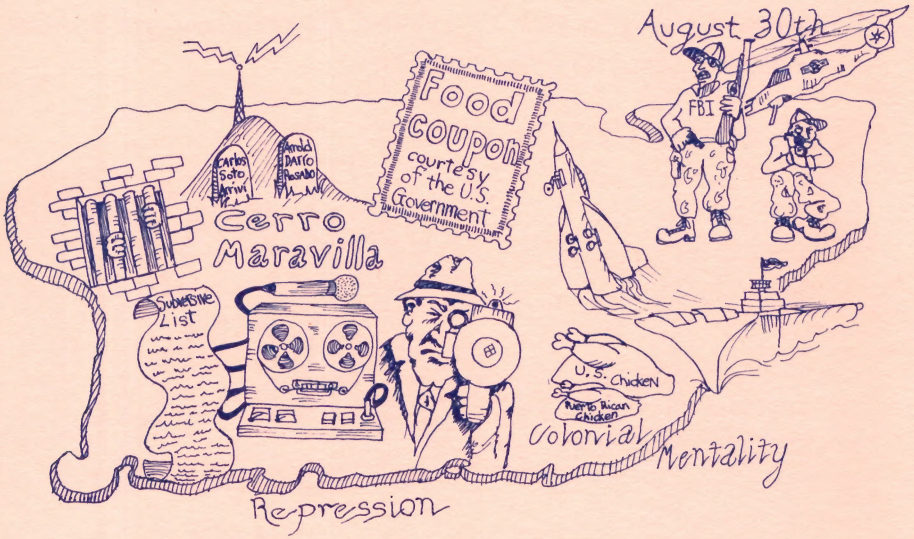
US Colonialism in Puerto Rico is a Low Intensity War



Since 1898, the US government has controlled the island of Puerto Rico. It has been able to accomplish this by employing what it calls Low Intensity War(LIW).

LIW is a longterm political, economic, and social battle for the hearts and minds of a people which resorts to overt military force only when more subtle and insidious forms of control fail.

A close look at LIW in Puerto Rico reveals that behind the US political presumption of bringing "democracy" to that island is the employment of a not-so-subtle repressive infrastructure that has continuosly supressed Puerto Rican opposition to US occupation. In 1937 in Ponce, Puerto Rico the US government supported the killing of dozens of members of the pro-independence Nationalist Party and the incarceration in US jails of Nationalist Party leaders such as Don Pedro Albizu Campos. In 1987, it was revealed that the FBI and the Puerto Rican police maintain a list of "subversives" totalling 80,000 people, or 3% of the population.

The FBI plays a vital role in the repression of Puerto Rico. In 1978, it's agents murdered two independentista activists at Cerro Marravilla. On August 30, 1985, the FBI led a military-type operation to capture and arrest 15 independentistas.

Like all recent US LIWs, the war in Puerto Rico is fought on many levels, using different US agencies. The use of welfare and food stamps may seem benign and humanitarian. But when they are used to create a "permanant underclass" of people, this aid becomes malignant. There now exists a large segment of the Puerto Rican population that feels dependent upon the US for their survival, and thus fear becoming an independent nation.

CONFRONT

US Intervention in all its forms

Another tactic of LIW is cultural assault. US cultural hegemony, pervasive throughout the world, is particularly acute and destructive in Puerto Rico. Until 1950, Puerto Rican school children were taught in English. It is still illegal in Puerto Rico to fly the Puerto Rican flag without the US flag next to it. Over the years, the traditional Puerto Rican diet of natural, unprocessed foods has been replaced largely by US fast food chains' burgers and fries.

The use of the US Criminal Justice System is another method of control. The US has attempted to criminalize fighters for Puerto Rican independence. Currently there are over 20 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners in US jails. They have received unduly long sentences. Once in prison they have endured both physical and psychological torture. Most notable are the cases of Alejandrina Torres at the Women's Control Unit in Lexington, KY and Oscar López who is now serving his time at the Marion Control Unit in Marion, Illinois.

Low Intensity Warfare is

REAL WAR

Why does the US want to control Puerto Rico?

Puerto Rico plays a vital military role in Bush's attempt to maintain strong influence in the Western Hemisphere. 13% of the island is owned by US military bases. From these bases the US has invaded many other nations in the region. In addition, the US uses the Puerto Rican National Guard to train other Spanish-speaking military forces in Latin America.

There are Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico and the US who despite the great strength of the US government have stood up against the inhumanity of colonialism.

We can join them.

Oppose US colonialism in Puerto Rico!

The **Free Puerto Rico Committee** is a national organization that works to develop understanding and support for the struggle of the Puerto Rican people to liberate their nation and to establish an independent socialist society. We have written materials, speakers, slide and film programs available on the history and current state of the Puerto Rican independence struggle. Please write or call:

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Get involved in the Free Puerto Rico Committee

- ☐ Be on our mailing list
- ☐ Set up a house meeting or program about Puerto Rico
- ☐ Make a financial contribution

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